

Section 4

Learning Area 1: Policy development and implementation

Amount of credit claimed: 60

Credit Level: 7

Background

In XXX an all Wales company was established that incorporated the merging of six regional companies. In merging all existing companies the organisation went through a period of significant change as all staff had to apply for new roles within the organisation. The new company was set up and four regions were introduced. Each region was assigned delivery responsibilities and a strategic lead for Policy development. All four regions plus corporate services were collectively responsible for the achievement of the Remit of Welsh Government. In XXX I was appointed to the role of Policy Manager and one aspect of my role was to lead on the strategic development of all activity that engaged volunteers from business and industry to work with young people, teachers and lectures in education. Prior to the merger, across Wales all of the six organisations had a strong track record of delivering activity within this field, but each organisation had an individual delivery model.

Summary of Learning Achieved:

Learning Outcomes

- Research, design and develop a policy and strategy for company x and strategically lead on its implementation
- Plan, create and disseminate a staff recruitment process to all Regional Management teams.
- Plan, design and deliver an all Wales induction programme including operational documentation and resources to support the delivery of the strategy.
- Review and evaluate the implementation of the policy, analyse responses and propose recommendations.

In this Learning Area I propose to critically analyse the way in which I developed the xxx policy at company x together with the lead responsibility I took for managing its implementation and evaluation between the period August xxxx and July xxxx.

Learning Outcome 1

Research, design and develop a policy and strategy for company x and strategically lead on its implementation

Analysis of learning and relationship to evidence

Prior to my appointment as a Policy Manager my experience was very much focussed on the management of service delivery and whilst I had been involved in facilitating a change in service within my geographic area of responsibility I had not strategically led on policy development on an all Wales basis. With this experience I felt in a strong position to be able to understand and appreciate how the change would impact on colleagues in our delivery team. I felt confident of my abilities to ensure that developments within policy were received positively and a collaborative approach could be taken to improving service delivery. As there was no formal training in developing policy I had to seek out opportunities to learn from colleagues and undertake research. This would enable me to gain an understanding of how to undertake appropriate research, prepare informed policy documentation and understand the process of consultation and evaluation of policy.

On reflection I can now identify that I took a proactive approach to undertaking experiential learning whilst undertaking this new role. I consider myself to have a strong visual and kinaesthetic learning style (Fleming 1987) which is supported by my VARK Learning styles analysis (see Appendix 1) and therefore this way of learning with regards to learning from others appealed to me. In learning to undertake research I found myself having to apply a different style of learning that did not feel comfortable. Having to read articles, policies and literature without any visual translation of the text was very difficult for me to engage with and I could identify that I preferred listening to presentations that were introducing new policies and research.

On appointment to the role of Policy Manager in August xxxx (see JD, page 4) I was asked to prepare an initial proposal (Appendix 2) on how company x could start to align our service to business volunteers, schools and colleges across Wales so that we were addressing the requirements of our remit letter 2012 – 2013 from Welsh Government and the company Development Plan (Appendix 3). The remit letter required company x to take a more strategic role across Wales in ensuring that a consistent service was delivered and with the

potential for reduction in budgets in future years there was a need to ensure that a more cost effective and efficient delivery model was adopted.

On receiving this task I researched existing practice across Wales, as an individual who had always worked in the same region and had little exposure to all Wales company x meetings prior to this role I needed to identify what was current practice of individuals who delivered this area of work and identify variances in delivery models. I was aware that some companies were directly involved in designing and delivering activities in schools whilst others were accustomed to commissioning this work to a third party to deliver. I had an extensive bank of evidence from my local region and my own personal experience of working at company y and personally taking a lead on initiating and managing the relationship between business, schools and colleges.

Having analysed this information I could identify that in order to introduce a new policy for this area of work that would require individuals to follow a different delivery model I needed to establish a bench mark from which I could identify the amount of development each region would need to undertake in order to align itself to the requirements of the remit. I designed a pro-forma and asked senior managers in each of the areas to complete it as they knew the individuals involved. This research (see Appendix 4) identified a number of anomalies in the skill base of some colleagues and in some regions a strong resistance to change existing practice. At this point in time I identified that it was important to appreciate that a change in policy would also bring about a change in job role and as a result I was not only looking at policy development but also focussing on change management. The benchmarking of colleagues in terms of their skill base and their varying levels of resistance to change became critical success measures throughout the implementation process of this policy development.

Lewin (1951 cited in Burnes, 2004:274) acknowledges that bringing about planned change that will impact on a group needs to involve 3 steps:

Step 1: Unfreezing – Identifying current behaviour and practice and ‘unlearning’ what you know so that you may be open to new ideas and new ways of working.

Step 2: Moving – Being motivated to learn new ways of working and a new set of behaviours.

Step 3: Refreezing – Acknowledging the new behaviours and new processes and establishing them as the equilibrium in the team.

Schein (1996 cited in Burnes, 2004:274) elaborated on Lewin's three-step model (1951) and stated that individuals in the 'unfreezing stage' needed to accept that they were losing their existing working patterns and the security of feeling comfortable in their current role. In order for the group to mobilise themselves to the next step of 'moving' they would need to accept the loss and possibly accept that they would be feeling uncomfortable and exposed.

Whilst Lewin's model may seem out-dated I feel that the key principles are transferable to the context in which I have been managing a process of change.

Lewin's theory can be aligned with Tuckman's Team Development theory (1965 cited in Mullins, 2005:532) in terms of groups of individuals coming together and following a process of storming, norming and forming.

The newly established process for consultation on policy development within company x required me to present my proposal on what I considered the new Education Business Partnership would aim to achieve and what action as an organisation we needed to undertake to my Regional Management Team for initial feedback. This proposal would then be shared by my Regional Director at Senior Management Team (SMT) discussions. I met with my line manager, the Head of Policy for the region to feedback on my research findings and present to him my proposal. This discussion proved very useful as my line manager asked me challenging questions which helped me develop my responses so that I was prepared for my presentation to the regional management team.

In my presentation to my regional management team the proposal (see Appendix 5) was accepted very positively and I could identify that this was due to the fact that all members had previously worked for the same organisation that had demonstrated innovation and were at the forefront of change and in this case did not see significant developmental requirements for their delivery staff as it was similar to exiting practice.

In discussions with my Regional Director I learnt that whilst SMT were supportive of my proposals for change I needed to be prepared for resistance from middle managers that were closer to delivery and had more direct contact with service users. Initially I had not appreciated the impact the merger had on our company culture and how it would hinder

colleagues in embracing further change from local established practices. I therefore looked to broaden my understanding of change, how to introduce the strategy for change and how to effectively manage the process. By applying a structure to the proposed implementation of change I considered that it would assist colleagues in understanding that the proposed change had been researched, planned and was being implemented in a professional manner.

Fayol (1949 cited in Burnes, 2004:42) proposes that managers have a responsibility for 5 principles that are linked to the effective identification, planning and management of change:

Planning – examining the future, deciding what needs to be done and developing a plan of action.

Organising – bringing together the resources, human and material, and developing the structure to carry out the activities of the organisation.

Command – ensuring that all employees perform their jobs well and in the best interests of the organisation.

Coordination – verifying that the activities of the organisation work harmoniously together to achieve goals.

Control – establishing the plans, instructions and commands are correctly carried out.

Fayol (1949 cited in Burnes, 2004:42)

In considering this model and applying it to my role I could identify that I was responsible for managing and initiating these 5 principles and the Senior Management team (SMT) were the commissioners of the project that would approve strategic proposals and monitor the project in order to ensure that the project didn't exceed any parameters.

Bullock and Batten (1985 cited in Burns, 2004:277) simplified the model of planned change to 4 phases –

1. Exploration
2. Planning
3. Action

4. Integration

In adopting this model I could identify that SMT had undertaken the initial exploration and had in principle identified a need for change. From that early stage my role was to undertake detailed research, scope an appropriate delivery model and policy for the company and prepare a detailed implementation plan that would assist with the transfer of delivery responsibilities to local delivery management teams.

In scoping out the detail of the policy that I proposed to share with SMT I could identify that whilst company x needed to respond to the requirements of Welsh Government we also needed to consider the views of key stakeholders such as employers, schools and colleges and Estyn. At this point, I started to research and adopt a critical thinking mind-set to my approach to policy development.

At this stage I could identify with Pettigrew and Whipp's theory (1993 cited in Burnes, 2004:306) where I was linking strategic and operational change in order to address 5 interrelated factors:

1. Environmental assessments – critically analysing data from external and internal environments. This included analysing Welsh Government and Estyn policies and reports, taking into consideration feedback the company was receiving from business and industry plus considering the operational boundaries of our WG Remit.
2. Leading change – creating a positive climate for change, identifying the direction of travel for the organisation and involving all staff at all levels in the journey. Colleagues had already experienced change as a result of the formation of company x and were resistant to any further change. In introducing the Policy and delivery model I took every opportunity to consult with colleagues on an all Wales basis. By attending team meetings and regional planning meetings I was able to communicate the proposals to colleagues at all levels and gain an understanding of any regional variables that would need to be considered such as rurality and language.
3. Linking strategic and operational change – ensuring that high level business proposals are reflected in operational detail and vice versa. By ensuring that a regular dialogue was maintained with SMT I realised that I was able to ensure that the delivery model was fully understood at all levels. In having SMT's support it ensured that on a regional basis senior managers were able to talk to delivery

colleagues about the new way of working and demonstrate a companywide commitment to the proposed change.

4. Human resources as assets and liabilities – ensuring that the organisation utilises its talent pool and the knowledge and skills appropriately. In designing and developing a new job description it enabled me to formalise company ambitions to utilise the existing pool of expertise. Consideration was also given to the Learning and Development requirements of the role and a formal induction programme was designed.
5. Coherence of purpose – ensuring that all of the above tie in with each other.

Whilst ensuring that the Policy and delivery model was fit for purpose I also ensured that it was coherent with other policies that connected with this area of work. For example, the company supports employers who are seeking to employ an Apprentice and our role is to visit the employer and assist them in publicising the vacancy. As this project involved another job role visiting employers it was essential that the delivery model recognised this and built in processes to avoid duplication of activity.

When carrying out an analysis of the internal environment I researched a range of company x documents to identify what type of requests we were receiving from schools and colleagues. It was evident that schools and colleges valued the 'all inclusive' service they had been receiving from company x where colleagues would identify a business partner, design the activity, coordinate the day and be on hand to oversee the delivery of the event.

From my bench marking exercise I could identify where in three out of four regions colleagues had a high level of skills and this translated across to the regional observations I had made from Inspection reports (xxxx, date) on schools in those areas. Having analysed these documents I could identify that from an education perspective there would be resistance to change as schools were happy with exiting provision and due to additional requirements being placed on teaching personnel they would be unable to fulfil any additional duties.

In considering the external environment I recognised that these factors could strengthen my argument that would persuade educational stakeholders to consider a new way of working. I researched Welsh Government (WG) education policies and identified what responsibilities

WG had placed on schools in order to ensure that all young people were in receipt of a broad and balance curriculum.

From Welsh Government's 'xxxx' proposals (see Appendix 6) it was evident that an emphasis was now being placed on Senior Managers in schools to ensure that a structure was in place to ensure that the establishment was offering young people a comprehensive service.

This view was supported by the xxxx (date) who concluded that whilst there was a range of activity between schools and employers taking place there were concerns that the activity lacked clear objectives and as a result it was difficult to measure the impact. NFER (2012) stated that there were ten features of successful school-employer links

1. Vision
2. Communication
3. Partnerships and connections
4. Leadership
5. Time and capacity
6. Flexibility
7. Curriculum
8. Programme design
9. Needs-based
10. Early intervention

This helped me to identify that if company x could apply a consistent approach across Wales to engaging business support we would be in a strong position to assist schools in ensuring that they were addressing Welsh Governments policy requirements. I could immediately identify how this evidence would support my proposal for a new delivery model as ultimately company x was reliant on the good will and support from employers. This model also offered benefits to schools in that they would be able to demonstrate to Estyn their abilities to develop partnership working with the local business community which is a requirement of

WG's 'xxxx Framework'. This being the framework that Estyn refer to when identifying good practice linked to partnership working.

In considering the views expressed by employers plus feedback from Senior Managers in Schools and Colleges I could see that both parties were becoming saturated with multiple requests being made of them from a range of organisations including company x that were all looking to offer similar services. Our new remit and a requirement for company x to become a facilitator/broker rather than responsible for delivering would enable company x to be identified as the lead organisation that could liaise with Schools and Colleges and be responsible for making a referral to other delivery partners.

From reviewing WG policies I also realised that this approach would achieve other WG requirements such as Policy x (date) and the requirement for all Schools and Colleges to work with company x and other providers including employers.

Welsh Government in their policy xxxx (xxxx) were requiring company x to:

- Facilitate learning institutions' delivery of the curriculum
- Encourage the engagement of pupils with the curriculum
- Bring in real-world examples to learning experiences ad
- Provide experience of the world of work

XXXX (date:Page no)

In order to ensure that all policies were consistent in style a company template had been prepared that included a list of standard headings. When furnishing the template with information relating to the service I decided to reference internal and external factors that were impacting on the policy such as WG, Employers and Schools. As the policy would be published on our company-wide intranet it was essential that I made sure that all members of staff could understand why there was a need to change the service and what our proposals were.

Whilst ensuring that the policy provided a top-line strategic vision I also ensured that it gave clear examples of how the policy could be translated to delivery practice. By annotating sub headings it enabled me to provide an explanation of how the policy would work in practice. This would ensure that all staff could relate it to their role, school or area where they were working.

When considering 'strategic milestones' for the policy I had to consider that the delivery team for this area of work were new to post and whilst some individuals were competent in terms of skill everyone would need to be inducted into the new deliver model and have a clear understanding of our vision for this area of work. By including termly focused milestones it enabled all colleagues to identify what were our aspirations as an organisation and how it linked with our strategic vision.

In order to ensure that the policy cross referenced with other areas of work I ensured that reference was made to IO, the company Management Information System as this was the only way on an all Wales basis that activity could be accurately mapped.

From speaking with my line manager it was agreed that in order to measure the impact of our departmental contribution to researching and developing this area of work we needed to build in a period of time for evaluation. In order to formalise this process I decided to include it in the policy document so that all staff were aware.

In December 2012 the new service was proposed to Welsh Government in our XXX Business Plan (see Appendix 7). The xxxx policy was introduced to company x colleagues in January XXX through an in house launch using our intranet(see Appendix 8).

Following the launch of the 'xxxx Policy' I took every opportunity to meet with middle managers to discuss the proposals and listen to their concerns. I realised from a very early stage in developing the policy that I needed to prove myself and my abilities to an all Wales audience of delivery managers. This I felt had an impact on whether we would be successful in making it past first base with the acceptance that a new policy was necessary.

Having managed a delivery team in company a for over 10 years, I had in my local region proven myself and my ability to lead on this area of policy. In my initial meetings with managers across Wales I took every opportunity to demonstrate my willingness to listen and learn from colleagues and to find out more about them as individuals and the skills they were bringing to their role. Earlier in my career I was fortunate to undertake a Post Graduate Certificate and the skills and knowledge acquired in this course helped me in becoming an 'emotionally intelligent' (Goleman 1996) individual that was self-aware and aware of other's needs. From re-visiting this material and applying theory to my current project I could see opportunities for its application. I could identify what were each individuals motivations and as a result know how to present a proposal in a way that would engage them positively.

My chosen methods of communication proved critical to the successful implementation of the policy and the buy in from middle managers. As an organisation that was having to make efficiency savings due to proposed cuts in public funding an emphasis was placed on utilising video conference and email. From my experience as a xxx Manager I could identify that email was an easy route to ensuring that all colleagues were receiving the same message, at the same time it was not effective at establishing an effective line of communication between me and middle managers. Email can be very impersonal and in order to build a relationship and develop rapport between people it is more effective to speak to people. By undertaking face to face communication via video conferencing with colleagues it enables you to listen to their concerns and encourages them to share their ideas. This can be a time consuming exercise and when working on an all-Wales basis may at times be impossible. Whilst email would ensure the coverage of the message it didn't ensure that individuals would open, read and understand what information was being supplied. In order to ensure that lines of communication were clear and messages were communicated to all staff, a multi-modal form of communication was required that included, email, face to face discussions via video conference and telephone plus written updates via the company newsletter.

As each middle manager had been allocated a strategic lead area of service to be responsible for within their region I decided that I needed to establish a network with these four individuals in order to aid the way in which I was communication with colleagues in delivery. Prior to establishing a network I spent time with each of them either face to face or via video conference in order to establish a relationship and gain an understanding of what were their concerns about this area of work. This network proved critical to the successful implementation of the policy as the individuals became regional 'champions' that aided the communication of change to colleagues across Wales and assisted in managing the local implementation of the new delivery model.

In order to formalise the process of implementation I identified that a detailed plan was required that would identify all of the inputs that were necessary in order to ensure that the new delivery model and policy was implemented on schedule. In developing the implementation plan (Appendix 9) for the policy I also identified the broader contributions that other company x departments were required to support. In order to ensure that all of the

following requirements were agreed by SMT and scheduled into corporate job schedules it required a range of negotiation skills.

- Design and development of all xxxx resources.
- Recruitment to new delivery job role – xxxx Advisors
- Induction of xxxx Advisors
- Training for Regional Management Teams
- Marketing and promotional activities
- Data recording – Management Information Systems
- Data Protection – media footage

As the successful introduction of this new delivery model was reliant on the contributions of the wider company x team I recognised that there was an element of risk attached to the project which needed to be communicated to SMT. I learnt that by preparing a risk register (PRINCE 2:82) it would assist me in communicating to the Senior Management team who were the critical stakeholders, what contributions the project was reliant upon, what were the possible risks and what were my proposed options and recommendations to minimise the risk (see Appendix 10). By adopting this monitoring process it enabled me to ensure that all imminent risk was identified at an early stage and plans could be implemented to ensure that the introduction of the new delivery model remained on schedule and within budget.